

II. JOB CORPS ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE

Job Corps provides education and training opportunities for youth nationwide, and the centers are the heart of the program. Yet center operations are supported by a distinct administrative structure that encompasses many elements and diverse entities. State and federal agencies, private for-profit organizations, private nonprofit organizations, and national unions all play significant roles. This chapter describes the administrative structure of Job Corps and presents data on the geographic distribution and characteristics of the key operating components: OA agencies, centers, and placement agencies.

A. NATIONAL OFFICE AND REGIONAL OFFICES

The National Office of Job Corps provides leadership, program policy direction, and guidance for administration and operation. To carry out this mission, the National Office must establish goals and objectives for all program components; coordinate Civilian Conservation Center (CCC) operations with the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and U.S. Department of the Interior (DOI); recommend funding levels for all components; establish national performance standards; conduct program analyses and reviews; award and administer national contracts for public relations, vocational training, student support, health services, and related activities; oversee the regional offices; and develop and modify specific programs and curricula. In addition, the National Office maintains liaisons and coordinates activities with other government agencies, including other offices in the Employment and Training Administration.

The National Office administers contracts with several unions under which union members work with center directors and staff to provide vocational training at selected centers across the country. The unions currently holding national contracts include the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and

Joiners of America, the International Masonry Institute, the National Plasterers and Cement Masons International Association, the International Brotherhood of Painters and Allied Trades, the United Auto Workers, the International Union of Operating Engineers, the Home Builders Institute, the Transportation-Communication International Union, and the Appalachian Council of the AFL/CIO.

Program and curriculum development efforts of the National Office generally involve collaboration with knowledgeable staff and stakeholders throughout the Job Corps program. The National Office forms work groups made up of staff at all levels in the system and charged with conducting the development work. This process is designed to ensure that program development is responsive to National Office and congressional priorities while taking full advantage of the knowledge that experienced staff can offer. (We illustrate this process in the chapters on vocational training and residential living.)

Within guidelines established by the National Office, the regional offices oversee all program operations in their respective regions. They negotiate, award, and administer OA, center, and placement contracts; monitor and coordinate working relationships among the various contractors; monitor contractors' financial operations; and monitor the performance of the centers. The regional offices also develop policies and standards for all Job Corps operations in the region, such as policies to assign applicants to particular centers. Finally, the regional offices coordinate activities with other regions and the National Office.

B. OUTREACH AND ADMISSIONS (OA)

OA agencies provide information about Job Corps, identify and screen candidates, and facilitate enrollment of eligible youths who decide to attend. Diverse organizations conduct OA activities under contract with the regional office. OA contractors include State Employment Security Agencies (SESAs), other state and local government agencies, nonprofit organizations, and for-profit firms,

some of which also operate Job Corps centers. OA contracts specify the contract goal--the number of students that a contractor is to recruit during a program year by gender and residential or nonresidential status--and the geographic area for recruitment. The financial terms of contracts have varied over time and across regions. Currently, all OA contracts provide for reimbursement of costs.¹ In a few regions, governmental and nonprofit agencies recruit students under less formal, unpaid arrangements.

Historically, SESAs were the primary providers of OA services. As recently as the early 1990s, SESAs were still responsible for recruiting more students into Job Corps than was any other type of agency. Over the past few years, Job Corps has shifted increasingly toward using private contractors and Job Corps center operators to perform the OA function.

In June 1996, 86 OA contractors were operating throughout the nine regions (Table II.1). SESAs held 14 of the contracts (16 percent) and recruited 29 percent of students. The other 72 contracts were divided equally between Job Corps centers and private contractors, although private contractors recruited a higher proportion of students (41 percent versus 30 percent recruited by centers).

Regions differ markedly in their reliance on the types of agencies, with several regions relying primarily on one kind (Appendix Table B.1). For example, center operators recruit most applicants in Region 1 (100 percent) and Region 2 (71 percent). Private noncenter agencies recruit most students in Region 3 (77 percent), Region 5 (80 percent), and Region 10 (80 percent). The other regions rely on a mix of agencies; although in each region one type of agency recruits just over half of eligible applicants: SESAs in Regions 4 and 6, private agencies in Region 7/8, and centers in Region 9.

¹Job Corps has used contracts that provide for a fixed payment for each student who enrolls.

TABLE II.1
NUMBER OF AGENCIES AND PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS RECRUITED,
BY AGENCY TYPE OF OA CONTRACTOR

Type of Contractor	Number of Agencies	Percentage of Students Nationwide
SESAs and Other State Agencies	14	29
Job Corps Centers	35	30
Private	37	41
Total	86	100

SOURCE: National Job Corps Study OA Counselor Survey.

The infrastructure of local OA offices and counselors they represent is extensive. Although not reported in Table II.1, these 86 contractors have more than 500 offices throughout the nation to recruit potential Job Corps students, with roughly 1,000 counselors overall. Individual OA offices range in size from those with a single OA counselor (the most common type) to those with up to 16 OA counselors.

C. CENTERS

With Job Corps centers located in 46 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico, Job Corps serves young men and women throughout the country. In the program year ending June 1996, Job Corps was able to serve just under 40,000 students at any one time. Of the available program slots, 56 percent were designated for males and 44 percent were designated for females (Table II.2). While the program's goal is to serve equal numbers of men and women, it has been difficult to recruit enough women.

Although Job Corps is primarily a residential program, about 12 percent of program slots were designated for nonresidential students, who attend training and other activities at the Job Corps center but reside at home. Job Corps was conceived as an exclusively residential program, designed to remove students from a detrimental home or neighborhood environment. However, in an effort to expand services to a broader range of students with distinct needs, Job Corps introduced nonresidential programs that typically targeted females who had dependent children and would otherwise be unlikely to participate. Historically, nonresidential students have been a small fraction of Job Corps students, reserving no more than 10 percent of all slots. The JTPA Amendments of 1993 increased the proportion of students that may be served in a nonresidential setting from 10 percent to 20 percent. Yet despite the legislative change, the proportion of slots allocated to nonresidential students has increased only slightly.

TABLE II.2

NUMBER OF CENTERS AND CENTER CAPACITY IN PROGRAM YEAR 1995, BY CENTER TYPE

	Total	CCCs	Contract Centers		
			Contract Center Total	Primarily Residential	Significantly Nonresidential
Number of Centers	110	30	80	54	26
Center Capacity in PY 1995	39,366	6,330	33,036	24,300	8,736
Average Capacity per Center	358	211	413	450	336
Percentage of Center Capacity by Type of Student					
Male	56	75	52	56	43
Female	44	25	48	44	57
Residential	88	99	86	96	61
Nonresidential	12	1	14	4	39
Male residential	52	74	48	54	30
Male nonresidential	4	<1	4	1	13
Female residential	36	24	38	41	31
Female nonresidential	8	1	9	3	26

SOURCE: Data are from SPAMIS, On Board Strength Report, Program Year 1995.

Both public and private entities operate Job Corps centers. Of the 110 centers in operation at the time of the mail survey, 30 were CCCs, operated by agencies of USDA and DOI under interagency agreements with DOL. The CCCs accounted for about 6,300 program slots or 16 percent of capacity. Agencies currently operating Job Corps centers are the Forest Service, the Bureau of Reclamation, the Fish and Wildlife Service, and the National Park Service. Until recently, CCCs have experienced very little turnover in administration, as many started in 1965 are still overseen by the same agency 30 years later.² Indeed, the average time a CCC has been operated by the same organization is 15 years, compared to just 6 years for contract centers.

Located almost exclusively in rural areas, CCCs typically operate in national forests and parks and on other public lands. Most are inaccessible by public transportation and largely isolated from surrounding communities. The average CCC has considerably fewer students than its privately run counterpart. CCCs serve an average of just over 200 students at a time, while contract centers average over 400 students.

The other 80 centers operating in early 1996, which accounted for 84 percent of capacity, were operated by private contractors under contract with Job Corps' regional offices.³ Regional offices use a competitive bidding process to select private contractors to operate Job Corps centers in their region. Currently, these contractors include for-profit training organizations, as well as nonprofit

²In the last few years, however, one CCC (Gateway JCC) was closed and another CCC (Iroquois) has operated under considerably reduced capacity and was transferred to a private contractor.

³Since early 1996, two contract centers have closed (Tuskegee JCC in Alabama and Knoxville JCC in Tennessee), eight contract centers have opened (Loring JCC in Maine, Fort Devens JCC in Massachusetts, Connecticut JCC in Connecticut, Memphis JCC in Tennessee, Montgomery JCC in Alabama, Chicago JCC in Illinois, Flint-Genesee JCC in Michigan, and Long Beach JCC in California), one has changed from CCC to contract center operator (Iroquois JCC in New York), and one (which formerly was a satellite of another center) became an independent center (Treasure Island in California), for a net increase of eight contract centers.

entities such as Native American tribal organizations, a university, and a YWCA. Most center contracts are held by regional or national corporations that operate several centers under separate contracts. These centers are monitored by, and are accountable to, their own corporate headquarters, as well as to the Job Corps regional office. Affiliation with a national corporation creates additional administrative relationships and requirements for an individual center. It also offers additional internal sources of training, information, and technical assistance. The competitive contracting process also creates organizational and staff turnover at a center, when a contract is awarded to an organization other than the incumbent contractor.

Most nonresidential slots are in contract centers. Indeed, 26 contract centers in which at least 20 percent of slots are nonresidential contain about three-fourths of all nonresidential slots. To understand how a significant fraction of nonresidential students might affect operations, the nature of students' program experiences, and ultimately the program's impacts, we will examine separately the operations of centers that are primarily nonresidential and centers that have at least 20 percent of slots reserved for nonresidential students. Overall, these centers with a significant nonresidential capacity contain about 22 percent of program slots. They are located in urban areas, and a majority of slots (57 percent) are reserved for females. Both the urban location of these centers with a significant nonresidential capacity and the percentage of slots dedicated to women are in contrast to the situation with CCCs (which are mainly in rural locations and have only 25 percent of slots allocated to females).

D. PLACEMENT AGENCIES

Placement agencies, the third major component of the Job Corps program, assist former Job Corps students to obtain and maintain employment that will allow them to become self-sufficient. Two types of support are provided: (1) help securing a job or placement in further education, and

(2) help finding community support services or relocation assistance. All former Job Corps students are eligible for these services, regardless of the amount of time they are enrolled in the program or whether they complete any aspect of the program, for a period of six months from the date they terminate their enrollment at a center.⁴

Placement contractors provide the first type of support, under competitively awarded contracts that are administered by the regional offices. These contractors provide a broad range of services to students to assist them in obtaining a job, including the dispensing of information to students while they are still enrolled at a center, job search assistance, direct job referrals, and assistance with enrollment in college, other postsecondary training programs, or the military. In addition, these contractors also are responsible for verifying whether a student meets the criteria for a valid placement and for obtaining information on the wages former students received at the jobs they were placed in.

These contracts for placement services are held by three categories of contractors: (1) Job Corps centers, (2) other private for-profit organizations, and (3) SESAs or other state agencies.

In June 1996, 76 placement contracts were in place nationwide (Table II.3). These included 34 placement contracts held by Job Corps centers, 31 contracts held by other private organizations, and 11 contracts held by SESAs or other state agencies. Substantial variation exists across the regions in the number and types of placement contractors (Appendix Table B.3). For example, Region 4 (which has the largest student capacity) has 15 placement contractors, while Region 1 (which has the smallest student capacity) has only 3. Moreover, while Regions 6 and 9 heavily use placement

⁴Placement contractors do not provide services to students who were terminated during the 30-day probationary period for drug use or violence or to fraudulent enrollments (students who were determined to be ineligible for the program after enrollment). At the time the study began, Job Corps policy was to terminate services upon initial placement. This policy was revised in Program Year (PY) 1995 to require expanded placement assistance and support for the full six-month eligibility period.

TABLE II.3

NUMBER OF PLACEMENT AGENCIES AND PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS SERVED,
BY AGENCY TYPE

	Number of Contracts	Percentage of Students Served
Job Corps Center Operators	34	34
Other Private Organizations	31	48
SESAs	11	18
Total	76	100

SOURCE: SPAMIS data for Program Year 1995.

contractors that are affiliated with center operators, Regions 1 and 10 do not have any such placement contractors and rely solely on other private organizations. SESAs are used primarily in Regions 4, 6, and 7/8.

Center-affiliated placement contractors generally had smaller operations and provided placement services for fewer students under each contract compared to other private contractors and to the number of students served under contracts awarded to a SESA or other state agency. In terms of the number of students assigned to each placement agency, private placement contractors that were not affiliated with a center provided job placement services to approximately one-half of all Job Corps students. Although center-affiliated contractors hold about 45 percent of the placement contracts, they served only 34 percent of the students. Finally, SESAs and other state agencies holding placement contracts were assigned approximately 18 percent of the terminees during PY 1995.

The second type of support is provided by two contractors who hold sole-source contracts with the National Office to provide support services to former Job Corps students. Specifically, two nonprofit organizations, Women in Community Service (WICS) and Joint Action in Community Service (JACS), provide both pre-termination and post-termination support services to students. The services WICS and JACS provide are designed to help students make the transition into the community after they leave Job Corps and help them obtain and maintain a job. These organizations provide students still enrolled in Job Corps with information about the communities they have chosen to locate in and the types of social services available. After students have left the center, WICS and JACS attempt to contact them to determine what support services they need to be able to succeed in the labor market and to provide referrals to community service providers.

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